

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Propertyhistoric name Royster, Marcus, Plantation
other names/site number _____**2. Location**street & number North Carolina Route 96 ☐ not for publication
city, town Wilbourns ☒ vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Granville code 077 zip code 27507**3. Classification**

Ownership of Property

- ☒
- private
-
- ☐
- public-local
-
- ☐
- public-State
-
- ☐
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- ☐
- building(s)
-
- ☒
- district
-
- ☐
- site
-
- ☐
- structure
-
- ☐
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>10</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
<u>1</u>	<u> </u> sites
<u>1</u>	<u>4</u> structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
<u>12</u>	<u>6</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

Historic and Architectural Resources of Granville
County, North CarolinaNumber of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register 0**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Date

William S. Ruff
State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.
- ☐ removed from the National Register.
- ☐ other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic-single dwelling

Agriculture/Subsistence

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic-single dwelling

Agriculture/Subsistence

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls weatherboard

roof metal

other wood

brick

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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Section number 7 Page 1 DESCRIPTION

The view from the exceptionally finished, Greek Revival style, Marcus Royster Plantation house is the finest and most sweeping of any former plantation seat in the county; from the top of a tall rise, it surveys a varied collection of frame and log outbuildings and a rolling expanse of fields, pastures and small groves of trees that stretch to the horizon. The exterior of the expansive, two-story tall, T-shaped dwelling is handsomely detailed, from the dentils that top its west facing, front windows and ring its cornice, to its fully realized and almost academically correct, classical portico, the finest Greek Revival style architectural device surviving from Granville County's plantation era. Intact and in good condition, with only a small twentieth century shed ell to the rear altering its original appearance, the house is joined by two mid-nineteenth century outbuildings - one said to have been an air-cure tobacco barn, the other probably originally a smokehouse - and numerous log and frame outbuildings dating from the county's bright leaf tobacco era.

The low hipped roof dwelling's most striking and significant feature is the portico centered at the middle of its three-bay front facade. Its entablature, set between two pairs of smooth columns and a triangular pediment, features the full host of proper Doric decorative devices. Its long vertical triglyphs are flanked by blank metopes, topped by projecting mutules and supported by triangular guttae.

The finish of the tall, wide, front elevation is almost equal to that of the portico. Entablatures adorned with strings of dentils top the immense twelve-over-twelve and eight-over-eight front windows. Rows of dentils underpin the front and rear cornices of the front block, running from patternboard to patternboard and original exterior brick chimney to original exterior brick chimney. They adorn the sides of the original, two-story rear ell as well. Completing the handsome finish of the exterior are beaded weatherboards covering the heavy mortise, tenon and peg frame and a raised brick foundation that retains some of its original wooden barred openings.

An ornately finished entry leads into the center hallway of the house. It is flanked by wide flush boards and topped by three attenuated, applied diamonds. The three panels of each of its paired doors, as well as the panels of the aprons beneath its sidelights, are formed of two raised, geometric boxes, a smaller

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box set atop a larger one. The same treatment is found at single faces of the wide, three-panel, interior doors; the other faces have flush panels. Set in plain conerblock surrounds, these doors are composed of a horizontal panel topped by two vertical ones. Though its original thin rectangular "tobacco stick" stiles have been replaced, the stair of the central hall retains its curving octagonal handrail, rounded tapered newels and scalloped ends. The door at the head of the upstairs hall, leading to the back bedroom, has three horizontal, geometrically raised panels, reflecting if not exactly mirroring the front doorway. Completing the remaining interior finish are tall baseboards with rounded moldings atop and geometrically articulated, post and lintel mantels.

Two outbuildings likely built during the plantation era still stand near the house ["A" on accompanying sketch map], amidst the property's numerous later outbuildings. To the house's north side, across a pasture, is a tall, mortise and tenon building enframed on three sides by sweeping sheds [E]. It is said to have once been an air-curing barn. A second mortise and tenon outbuilding to the house's fore apparently once served as a smokehouse [P]. It is ringed by a variety of late nineteenth and early twentieth century bright leaf tobacco era outbuildings, including two frame barns [L and Q] and four log buildings - two tobacco barns [N and O], a corn crib [K] and a small barn [J]. Also within this group of outbuildings is a post-1970 non-contributing, frame and metal office [M] and four small, post-1970, non-contributing, metal silos [F, G, H and I]. To the house's rear stands a frame smokehouse [D] and a frame former tenant house [B], also raised during the bright leaf era. To its south side is a non-contributing, post-1970 trailer [C].

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Agriculture

Period of Significance

1850s to 1937

Significant Dates

1850s

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

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Section number 8 Page 1 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Marcus Royster Plantation house is one of the most complete and untouched expressions of the Greek Revival style built during Granville County's plantation era, from the dentils, surrounds, front entry and portico of its exterior, to the intact and stylishly finished doors, mantels and stairs of its interior. (See associated Property Type 1 - Greek Revival and Romantic Style Dwellings) Its almost academically correct front portico, adorned with the many decorative devices of the Doric order, is the finest and most complete single example of the Greek Revival style in the county. The former plantation seat's generous and finely finished two-story, T-shaped configuration, coupled with its mid-nineteenth smokehouse and purported air-curing barn - one of the only pre-flue curing tobacco barns surviving in the county, if it did indeed once hold tobacco dried solely by the air - are evocative of life on a large antebellum plantation. (See associated Historic Context - The Plantation Era in Granville County, 1746-1865) Its full complement of late nineteenth and early twentieth century, bright leaf era outbuildings, though interspersed with a few modern structures necessary to serve the farm's present extensive cattle operations, contribute to its significance as representative of life on a large farm during that later era. (See associated Historic Context 2 - Bright Leaf Tobacco and Rural Granville County, 1866-1937, and associated Property Type 1 - Outbuildings) Its significance during both plantation and bright leaf eras is bolstered by its exceptional location atop a hill within sight of only fields, pastures and copses of trees. The property has been in use as a traditional bright leaf tobacco farm within the past 50 years; its period of significance has been assigned a closing date of 1937, however, because it has not achieved exceptional importance within the past half century.

Marcus Royster (1806-1878), the original owner of the house, acquired numerous tracts of land in the county between 1839 and 1860 and it cannot be determined which deed (or deeds) relate to the plantation seat property. According to local tradition he built his residence around 1840 [1], but it was more likely built during the 1850s, when Royster's wealth had increased to a level that would have more easily allowed him to erect such a grand and stylish dwelling. In 1850, according to the federal census, he owned 14 slaves; by 1860, however, according to the federal census, he had \$5,400 in real property and \$38,800 in personal property, including 31 slaves housed in five slave houses. The house and farm remained in the family following Royster's death,

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exchanging hands among his heirs [Will of Marcus D. Royster - Will Book 23, Page 311, probated 1878; Deed Book 35, Page 575 (1883); Deed Book 37, Page 393 (1884); Deed Book 38, Page 122 (1885)], into the 1920s. In that decade it was purchased by one of the county's largest local landowners, W. L. Gregory. [2] In 1974 the Gregory estate sold the property [Deed Book 204, Page 692] and it is now the center of the extensive pasturage of the Granville Cattle Association.

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- [1] Interview with local historian Arthur Ray Currin, 1986.
[2] Interview with local historian Arthur Ray Currin, 1986.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Granville County Deeds. Granville County Courthouse, Oxford, N.C.

Granville County Wills. Granville County Courthouse, Oxford, N.C.

Interview with local historian Arthur Ray Currin, 1986.

United States Manuscript Censuses. Microfilm located at Richard H. Thornton Public Library, Oxford, N.C.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

☐ See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approximately 307 acres

UTM References

A

Zone	Easting	Northing
<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

C

Zone	Easting	Northing
<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

B

Zone	Easting	Northing
<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

D

Zone	Easting	Northing
<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

☒ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

☒ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

☒ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marvin A. Brown/ Architectural Historian & Patricia Esperon/ Historian

organization Granville County- Oxford Historic Survey date 8/17/87

street & number P.O. Box 1556(State Historic Pres. Office) telephone 919-693-1491

city or town Oxford state N.C. zip code 27565

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM REFERENCES

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A	17	703660	4039170	F	17	703440	4038270
B	17	703250	4039180	G	17	703520	4038110
C	17	703260	4038900	H	17	703700	4038060
D	17	703070	4038900	I	17	703700	4037750
E	17	703070	4038260	J	17	704840	4038320

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at point A: 17 703660 4039170 on the USGS polygon, where the northern edge of the branch of Little Johnson Creek meets the fence line marked on the USGS map. Continuing in a straight line west, approximately 1000 feet, along the fence line, to point B: 17 703250 4039180 on the polygon, where the fence line turns south. Continuing in a straight line south approximately 750 feet, along the fence line, to point C: 17 703260 4038900 on the polygon, where the fence line turns west. Continuing west in a straight line approximately 750 feet to point D: 17 703070 4038900 on the polygon, where the fence line meets the eastern edge of Route 96. Continuing south approximately 2000 feet, along the eastern edge of Route 96, to point E: 17 703070 4038260 on the polygon approximately 200 feet south of the entrance lane on the eastern edge of Route 96. Continuing in a straight line east approximately 1500 feet, paralleling the south of the entrance lane to point F: 17 703440 4038270 on the polygon, at the western edge of the farm pond. Continuing in a straight line southeast approximately 500 feet, along the western edge of the farm pond, to point G: 17 703520 4038110 on the polygon, at the southern edge of the farm pond. Continuing in a straight line southeast approximately 500 feet, through the grove of trees, to point H: 17 703700 4038060 on the polygon, at the eastern edge of the grove of trees. Continuing in a straight line due south approximately 875 feet, from the edge of the woods across the field clearing to point I: 17 703700 4037750 on the polygon, at the southern edge of the branch of

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Little Johnson Creek. Continuing along the southern edge of the branch of Little Johnson Creek as it meanders northeast approximately 3750 feet to point J: 17 704840 4038320 on the polygon where the branch of Little Johnson's Creek turns northwest. Continuing along the northern edge of the branch of Little Johnson's Creek as it meanders northwest approximately 4125 feet to the point of origin.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Approximately 307 acres that include the dwelling, outbuildings, and fields that have been historically associated with the property, maintain historic integrity, and convey the property's historic setting are being nominated for the National Register. The remaining acreage has been excluded because it is not known with certainty to be historically associated with the property.

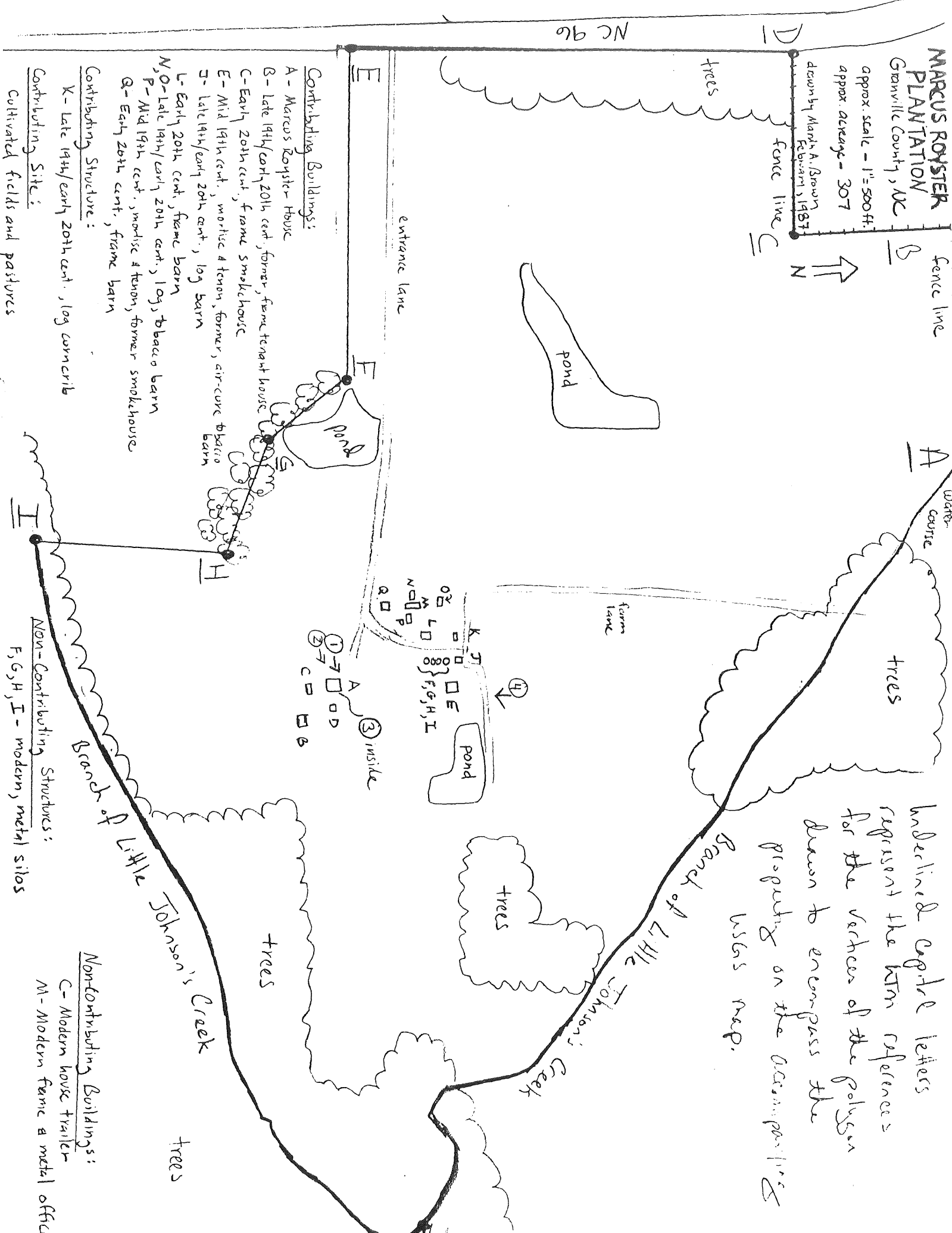
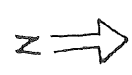
The northern boundary from UTM points J to A, A to B, B to C and C to D includes the fields to its south and excludes property not known with certainty to be historically associated with the property to its north. The western boundary from UTM points D to E includes the fields to its east and excludes property that falls outside the owner's property line to its west. The southern boundary from UTM points E to F, F to G, G to H and H to I includes the fields to its north and excludes property that falls outside of the owner's property line to its south. Because the exact property lines cannot be determined for this property these USGS points, corresponding to particular geographic features, were chosen as the best alternative in delineating property boundaries. The remainder of the southern boundary from UTM points I to J includes the fields to its north and excludes property not known with certainty to be historically associated with the property to its south.

MARCUS ROYSTER PLANTATION

Granville County, NC

approx. scale - 1" = 500 ft.
approx. acreage - 307

drawn by Martha A. Brown
February, 1987



Underlined capital letters represent the ktm references for the vertices of the polygon drawn to encompass the property on the accompanying USGS map.

- Contributing Buildings:
- A - Marcus Royster House
 - B - Late 19th/early 20th cent, former, frame tenant house
 - C - Early 20th cent, frame smokehouse
 - E - Mid 19th cent, mortise & tenon, former, cir-cure tobacco barn
 - F - Late 19th/early 20th cent, log barn
 - L - Early 20th cent, frame barn
 - N - Late 19th/early 20th cent, log, tobacco barn
 - P - Mid 19th cent, mortise & tenon, former smokehouse
 - Q - Early 20th cent, frame barn

- Contributing Structure:
- K - Late 19th/early 20th cent, log corner crib
- Contributing Site:
- Cultivated fields and pastures
- Non-contributing Site:
- F, G, H, I - modern, metal silos
- Non-contributing Buildings:
- C - Modern house trailer
 - M - Modern frame & metal office

